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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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DR. C. T. CURRELLY RETIRES FROM MUSEUM

The Board of Trustees of the Royal Ontario Museum has announced the retirement of Dr. C. T. Currelly, after 35 years of service as Director of the Museum of Archaeology. Born in Exeter, Ontario in 1876, Dr. Currelly graduated from Victoria College in 1898. When only 24 years of age, Dr. Currelly was associated with Flinders Petrie in exploration of Egypt, Sinai and Crete. He was the discoverer of the tomb of Aahmes, and the Cow Goddess and Shrine at Deir el Bahri.

During his period abroad, Dr. Currelly's zeal and resourcefulness was responsible for the amassing of a collection upon which the present Museum of Archaeology was built up. An inital exhibit was held in 1910 at the University. From this collection, originally housed in a basement with a leaking roof, has grown the present Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology which has become one of the important archaeological collections on this continent.

Dorothy Burr Thompson who has been lecturing in Classical Archaeology at the University of Toronto, has been appointed as Acting Director on Dr. Currelly's retirement.

ONTARIO'S TRAILS BECKON

During the vacation months of July and August, many of us will be following woodland trails and canoeing on Ontario's lakes and rivers. Some trails have an origin centuries old, since, before the earliest Europeans arrived in America, the Indians had made well-defined routes through the woods from one waterway to another, which they used for hunting trips and when on the war path. These paths were noted and utilized by early French explorers and traders. The chain of lakes and rivers now known as The Trent System was the one used in 1615 when the Hurons led Champlain from Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario. Paul Kane's fine portraits in the Ontario gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum depict the appearance of the Indians of the various tribes which blazed the original trails.

CRAYFISH, ANGLER'S BAIT

The crayfish or crawfish—freshwater kin of the lobster is an important food of the small-mouth black bass in some areas constituting two thirds of the diet of that fish. As fresh or preserved bait it is popular with the angler.

The crayfishes commonly seen, hide under stones in streams or lake margins. A large form has been taken in gill nets set in fifty feet of water by field parties of the Royal Ontario Museum. There are other species, usually overlooked, that spend most of the year in burrows in swamps, emerging in spring for breeding.

BASS ROUTS TROUT

"It is unusual in nature," states J. R. Dymond of the Royal Ontario Museum, "to find bass and trout occuring in the same water except in large lakes such as The Great Lakes. Competition usually results in the elimination, sooner or later, of either bass or trout from small and medium-sized lakes. There is evidence in many cases of diminution in the numbers of trout following the successful introduction of bass."

BIRDS HAVE A PAST

Most lovers of the out-of-doors are ready to admit that birds are among nature's most beautiful creations. How many of us, I wonder, are aware that at one time in the history of the world, not so very long ago geologically speaking, the feathered creatures did not exist. In the Royal Ontario Museum you may see, among the mural decorations representing prehistoric landscapes, illustrations of the oldest birds. They appeared at first, as far as the fossil record shows, about the middle of the age of dinosaurs, which dates back over a hundred million years. Only three examples of these ancient birds have been discovered. They differ from modern birds very distinctly in that they possessed a full set of teeth. This characteristic links them with the flying reptiles. The remains of the skeletons indicate that the bird was about the size of a full grown crow.

RUBY WEARER CAREFREE

"No trouble to their brows adorn,
If they this glowing gem have worn—the ruby."

Ruby, the July birthstone, is the gem variety of the mineral corundum. Corundum ranks next to diamond in hardness, a quality which makes it particularly desirable as a stone for ring settings. The Royal Ontario Museum has several examples of corundum in its cases, among them a ruby.

Rubies come essentially from the Oriental countries. The famous mines at Mogok in Upper Burma produce the finest quality. Here rubies occur in a granular limestone that forms the sides of the hills. These limestone outcrops erode in time through weathering, and quantities of rubies are washed down with deposits of clay and gravel into the adjacent river beds. A handful of pebbles from the river gravels shows all colours of the rainbow, because among them are to be found not only fragments of the many coloured corundum gems, but also spinels and tourmalines. Generation after generation of natives have sorted these gravels, being rewarded with an occasional deep coloured ruby. The highest standard of colour is a true pigeon blood quality which is a shade of red with a slight mixture of purple.

ONTARIO'S LIZARD - THE SKINK

The blue-tailed skink, the only true lizard found in eastern Canada, occurs in Ontario near Lakes Erie and St. Clair and southern Lake Huron and from Frontenac and Peterborough Counties northwest to Parry Sound district. This skink, like other lizards, has scales. The largest specimen in the Royal Ontario Museum is almost seven inches long.

COMING EVENTS AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

The Summer Museum Club starts July 2nd and runs until August 10th, four mornings a week, Tuesday through Friday. The club constitutes a health-giving, educational summer occupation for children from 8-14 years, because as the emphasis is on Natural History, the groups meet out-of-doors as much as possible.